

Why Correctly Reporting Contracting Actions is Important

Contract reporting is one of the final tasks of the contract award process. By this time, the contracting officer and buyer are, to put it bluntly, exhausted. Long nights preparing for discussions and preparing award documents to meet the target award date have taken their toll. Just about the last thing in the world they want to do is fill in those "silly" Standard Form 279s or DD Form 350s.

To encourage you to carefully fill out the reporting forms-- Here's what's in it for you--

The data you submit is used to track how well the contracting workforce is responding to Congressional initiatives, such as awards to small businesses and other socio-economic programs. If we do not get good, clean, accurate data, we can't provide a consistent and verifiable baseline of where we were and how much we've improved. Think about the last time you got conflicting data about a subject in which you had a vital interest (say where your teenager was last Saturday night when they were late for their curfew). Congress reacts much the same way when it cannot trust the data we provide-- it imposes restrictions on our actions or imposes more stringent monitoring mechanisms (e.g., even more detailed reporting requirements). These measures typically restrict the contracting officer's ability to truly tailor a contract to match the complexity of the Government's requirement or require a lot more time to fill out the reporting forms. Reporting accurate data in the first place stops this death spiral that eats away at contracting officer flexibility.

The data you submit is used to calculate the paperwork burdens imposed on the general public by new and existing requirements to submit information to the Government. Once again, if we do not have a consistent and accurate picture of when the general public had to submit information this year, we cannot accurately predict the number of submittals in upcoming years. Those figures are the cornerstone of public burden calculations. Accurate data can help eliminate unduly burdensome requirements, because the rulemaking process includes a cost-benefit analysis that compares the expected benefits of a rule to the burden it imposes on the general public. Reducing the burden on the public should help increase contractor participation in our acquisitions and result in better prices and solutions to our needs.

The data you submit is used to judge how well your contracting activity is performing. By not providing accurate and complete data, you may not be taking credit for the great work you've actually done to achieve our contracting goals for socio-economic and other programs. The only way for us to know how well you've done is to correctly report your contract award data!

So there you have it-- The benefits of accurately reporting contract award data outweigh the inconvenience of filling out the forms, even when you are exhausted at the end of the fiscal year. By the way, the Department of Defense is working on ways to

automate the reporting process and reduce the burdens on the contracting officer and buyer-- stay tuned for future developments.